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**A Few Precious  
Japanese Swords**  
FOR SALE AT  
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**HER MANIA**

[Original.]  
Norman Harley and I were officers  
studying at the artillery school at For-  
tress Monroe. One day after we had  
been visiting friends at the hotel Har-  
ley said to me:  
"Did you notice a girl come into the  
room we were in, look out on the wa-  
ters wistfully and go away?"  
"I did. She interested me."  
"She's a harmless lunatic, I'm told—  
Miss Dudley. She has a mania—thinks  
every man she meets wants to marry  
her; must be mortifying to her family.  
Just think! She declines offers before  
they are made."  
"If she would accept one from me be-  
fore it was made I'd be tempted to con-  
sider it a contract."  
"Not with a lunatic, Billy. That  
would be a crime."

The next day a party was made up  
to go on the boat to Norfolk and return.  
Harley and I included. We had scarce-  
ly left the dock when Harley passed me  
and said:  
"She's aboard."  
"Who?"

"The lunatic, Miss Dudley, the girl  
who declines offers of marriage before  
they're made."  
"Well, poor girl, I hope the trip will  
benefit her."

Later I saw Miss Dudley standing  
with some people I knew and joined  
the party purposely to secure an intro-  
duction. I was curious to know if she  
would decline to marry me without an  
invitation. I made an excuse to get her  
away from the others, and we were  
soon in a snug corner out of the wind  
beginning an acquaintance. The topic  
of conversation turned on the artillery  
corps and our stations.

"It seems to me," said Miss Dudley,  
"that you gentlemen of the red" have  
the pick of the service—at least in  
peace times. You never go out into  
the western wilderness; most of your  
time is spent on the coast."

"That accounts for more of the ar-  
tillery officers being married, I sup-  
pose," I replied.

"Are there more of them married  
than in the other corps?"  
I replied that I thought there were,  
but was not sure. I had only asked  
the question to lead her on to what I  
wanted.

"I think," she said, "that clergymen  
and soldiers should never marry."

"Why so?"  
"The clergy should be free from a  
responsibility of making a living for  
a family; the soldier should carry his  
life in his hands."

"I don't agree with you. I believe  
that every man is a better man and  
consequently better able to do his duty  
in any field when married than when  
single."

"What would you, for instance, do  
with a wife? You are ordered from  
pillar to post, and every time you  
move your wife would have to pack  
and unpack household goods. What a  
life for a woman to lead!"

"But think of the certainty of the  
income. Uncle Sam is the best of  
pay. A clerk marries, loses his posi-  
tion, and poverty stares him in the  
face. The officer holds his commission  
for life."

"But not for death. I have heard  
that it is the part of a soldier to die."

There was not in all this one word  
to indicate an unbalanced mind, and  
instead of leading up to a point where  
she might decline to marry me her  
words tended to keep me away from  
such an event.

"Death is such an uncertainty," I  
said, "even in the army, that it is  
scarcely to be considered. The army  
is a delightful circle. We are all broth-  
ers and sisters in the service, and the  
lives of officers' families, I believe,  
contain more than an average of hap-  
piness. I think any girl, whether rich  
or poor, could not do better than mar-  
ry an officer. If poor, she is sure of  
a fixed income; if rich, the army may  
give her a social position she would  
not otherwise attain."

She turned her head away and made  
no reply for a few moments, then spoke  
with her head still averted.

"Captain, you surely cannot blame  
me for this. I have endeavored to keep  
you from saying what you have said  
and cannot conscientiously permit you  
to say more. It is useless for you to  
argue. I will never marry in the ar-  
my."

Though I had angled for it, expected  
it, I was surprised when it came. In-  
deed I was heartily ashamed of the  
part I had played.

"My dear Miss Dudley," I said in a  
voice melting with pity, "let us join  
our friends."

We arose and joined a group sitting  
near. Somehow it struck me that the  
poor girl I had led to show her mental  
weakness wore a look akin to distress.

During the evening while at the hotel  
I saw Miss Dudley at a distance. She  
bowed to me, and with the bow I  
thought I noticed an embarrassed,  
pained look.

At any rate, I was curious to know  
more of the emotion that possessed her,  
and, joining her, I led her to a window,  
where we sank into easy chairs in view  
of the water.

"Captain," she said, "forgive me. I  
am not the poor girl who declines offers  
of marriage. Your friend was mistaken.  
I am her cousin."

"You overheard his remark?" I asked,  
aghast.

"No, but a friend of mine did. I  
could not resist the temptation for a  
little fun. My friend, too, was within  
earshot."

"The act will cost you a lifetime of  
misery," I exclaimed, "for I vow I will  
win you for my wife and drag you from  
pillar to post, packing and un-

packing, till I am laid on the shelf on  
half pay."  
And I kept my vow.  
ALEX. R. SHERMAN.

**THE GREEDY TOAD.**

*Ants, Cutworms and Honeybees Are  
a Favorite Diet.*

The toad is a gross feeder. He sallies  
forth usually after sundown in search  
of his prey, which includes pretty near  
every variety of insect and worm, and  
experiment proves that in twenty-four  
hours he will consume insect food of a  
volume fourfold the capacity of his  
stomach—in other words, he can fill up  
four times. Of angulose worms he does  
not seem very fond, though his gluttonous  
habit extends to them if they are too  
temptingly abundant, as after the earth  
has had a good wetting.

Ants appear to be his chief delight,  
with cutworms and thousand leggers  
next in order. Then come caterpillars  
and beetles. Grasshoppers and crickets  
furnish but a small part of his bill of  
fare, and spiders still less. He has no  
use apparently for dead prey, but when  
an insect or worm comes near him in  
motion he makes for it eagerly. A cut-  
worm which has discretion enough  
when in his neighborhood to keep curled  
up may easily escape, but as soon  
as it begins to travel let it beware.

His method of capturing a bug is to  
dart out his tongue, which, by the way,  
reverses the usual order of nature, it  
being fastened in front and loose be-  
hind. It is coated with a gelatinous se-  
cretion, and when it strikes an object it  
fastens firmly to it and conveys it into  
the toad's mouth. If the object, like a  
big worm, for instance, is too large to  
go unassisted into his gullet, he uses  
his forepaws, like a greedy child, to  
stuff it down.

Most of the viands which the toad  
loves are in their living state pests of  
the farm and garden. It is hard to say  
just where to place ants in this classi-  
fication. Nearly all students of nature  
as well as persons who have nothing  
but the traditions of their childhood to  
guide their judgment have acquired a  
certain affection for the ant. Its seem-  
ing intelligence, its artistic or mechan-  
ical instinct, its untiring industry, its  
courage, its care for its dead and  
wounded, its nice domestic economy  
and its habit of providing against the  
"rainy day" all tend to give it a sort  
of human claim upon mankind.

Still the fact cannot be ignored that  
the ant is an active distributor of plant  
lice; that it destroys lawns, spoils gar-  
den walks, infests dwellings and makes  
itself a common nuisance in the kitchen  
and pantry, driving the housewife  
almost to distraction. In the same cat-  
egory with ants as to human regard  
might be placed the honeybee, which  
the toad will eat when he gets a good  
chance.

One of his tricks is to station himself  
at the entrance to a hive and capture  
the belated home comers. As the toad  
does not spring into the air for his  
food, however, any apiarist may avoid  
this danger by raising his hives well  
above the ground.

Reference has been made to the  
toad's consumption of food as being out  
of proportion to his bulk. But what  
he can actually do at a sitting is best  
told by figures derived from experi-  
ment. His official record shows one  
case where he ate ninety rose bugs  
without being satisfied; another where  
he snapped up eight house flies in less  
than ten minutes. In one toad's stom-  
ach were found seventy-seven thou-  
sand-legged worms, in another sixty-  
five gypsy moth caterpillars, in another  
fifty-five army worms, and so on.

On the basis of his being able to fill  
his stomach four times in twenty-four  
hours, it requires a simple mathemat-  
ical calculation to discover how many  
pests a single toad might get away  
with in a day if he kept at it and the  
conditions were favorable, and, multi-  
plying this product by ninety, as repre-  
senting the days in a summer—for Mr.  
Toad is no respecter of Sundays or hol-  
idays—we can measure his potential ca-  
pacity for good as the gardener's friend.

**The Peculiar Yaghan Indian.**

In Tierra del Fuego the Yaghan In-  
dian leads a remarkable existence. He  
braves the seas of Cape Horn, naked,  
in a frail bark canoe. He owns no  
faith, religion or tribal tie other than  
that of the family, which huddles to-  
gether for food and sustenance. His  
only household goods are the smolder-  
ing firebrands which he carries on a  
slab of turf in his canoe to each fresh  
halting place. The women (usually  
two) paddle the canoe from the stern.  
The man crouches in the bow on the  
lookout for prey. On the shore run one  
or two dogs to sniff out and turn any  
lurking otter or sea bird. The long  
kelp that fringes the coast serves as  
a breakwater for the frail craft, whose  
crew only venture out into the open  
channels when their foresight tells  
them that a calm will be of sufficient  
duration to enable them to pass from  
one inhospitable beach to another.  
They are unduly developed in the torso  
at the expense of the lower limbs, for  
they pass their lives thus crouching the  
coasts. Fishing without hooks, living  
on mussels and fungus, this tribe marks  
the limit to which man may strip him-  
self of all aid or comfort and yet sur-  
vive.

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**The Horse and the Donkey.**  
The ancestors of the horse were ac-  
customed to roam over the plains,  
where every tuft of grass or bush  
might conceal an enemy waiting to  
spring upon them. Under these cir-  
cumstances they must often have saved  
their lives by starting quickly back or  
jumping to one side when they came  
without warning upon some strange  
object. This is a habit which has not  
left the animal even after long years  
of domestication.

On the other hand, the donkey is de-  
scended from animals which lived  
among the hills, where there were pre-  
cipices and dangerous declivities, and  
from these conditions resulted his  
slowness and sure footedness. His an-  
cestors were not so liable to sudden at-  
tacks from wild beasts and snakes.  
Besides, sudden and wild starts would  
have been positively dangerous to them.  
Consequently they learned to avoid the  
very trick which has been so useful to  
the horse. The habit of eating thistles,  
which is peculiar alone to the donkey,  
is also descended from these ancestors.  
In the dry, barren localities which they  
inhabited there was often little food;  
hence they learned to eat hard, dry  
and even prickly plants when there  
was nothing else.

**British Navy Divers.**  
Three schools for the instruction of  
divers are maintained by the British  
navy. The diving service is composed  
entirely of volunteers. No man is per-  
mitted as a candidate who has a short neck,  
is full blooded or shows a florid com-  
plexion. Those suffering from com-  
plaints affecting the head or heart or  
having a sluggish circulation are also  
excluded. Six weeks of training at a  
diving school fits a man for open sea  
work. It is essential to descend and  
ascend very slowly owing to the ef-  
fects of the great change of pressure.  
A man of strong constitution is not  
advised to ascend faster than two feet  
a second when the depth does not ex-  
ceed eighty feet. The men in training  
are first taken to slight depths, which  
are gradually increased to a maximum  
of 120 feet. The normal limit is 150  
feet, to which practiced divers often go.

**A Crowded House.**

Another crowded house at the Star  
theater shows that the public appre-  
ciate merit. The Cycle Dazzle is cer-  
tainly an exhibition of marvelous rid-  
ing and well sustains the reputation  
of being the champion of the world.  
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in good humor by their versatile act-  
ing, while the great violinist is cer-  
tainly a drawing card. The projecto-  
scope is an attractive feature of the  
entertainment. The bill at the Star  
this week is certainly one of the best  
ever seen at a vaudeville show in As-  
toria. There is no doubt but the house  
will be crowded every night during  
the week.

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